



# QUINCY UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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Dear Members of the Quincy Community,

The November 4, 2014 Quincy School Building Referendum is one of the most discussed issues in a long period of time. Through research, personal discernment, attendance at a town hall meeting, and numerous discussions with people on all sides of the debate, I am comfortable supporting this referendum. As an educator closely connected to the Catholic schools in Quincy for four decades and presently an employee of Quincy University, I need to know that this plan is good for every entity in our wonderful city. The decision by the committee to remove the area near QND as a possible site for a new grade school showed a true desire to work collaboratively and justly. Just a few days away from the November 4 voting, I feel confident that our community will benefit from passage of this referendum.

As Director of Student Teaching for Quincy University, I have the opportunity to visit student teachers in every school building in the Quincy Public School System. There is no question that time has taken its toll on these structures. Millions of dollars will have to be invested to ensure a safe setting and a positive learning environment for the students and staff. As has been mentioned many times from a financial perspective, the community's choice is to invest approximately \$66 million dollars to "fix" the structures, or invest \$89 million dollars to create new structures that will take us far into the future.

Rather than repeat the information promulgated through various forms of media, I wish to share a more personal reflection. We are blessed to have educational offerings in Quincy that cannot be matched by most other cities in Illinois. When families and companies visit Quincy, they should see all educational entities as viable and strong. So often, as principal of Quincy Notre Dame, I would meet prospective families considering a move to Quincy. As with my colleagues and friends at Quincy Senior High School, we knew if we did not sell them on Quincy, their children would not attend either institution. This building plan for the Quincy Public School System is for each and every one of those attached to our public schools, our Catholic schools, our community college, and our university. Also included are St. James Lutheran, Quincy Christian, Blessing-Reiman College of Nursing, Gem City College, the home schools in our city, and the numerous other organizations that provide educational opportunities to young and old. Any initiative that enhances our city as a whole positively impacts all of us living here.

We may be Raiders, Blue Devils, Hawks, Trailblazers, or any other team represented in Quincy. This is a great opportunity to retain our personal affiliations and yet join together to do something that is good for Quincy. This is a rare opportunity for the citizens to unite to impact more than the Quincy Public School System. It is an opportunity to better the future for all of us.

Ray Heilmann, Director of Student Teaching and Off-Campus Studies  
Quincy University